



DEFIANT™

2

\$2.50

\$3.25 CANADA

WAR DANCER



ALONE and UNARMED

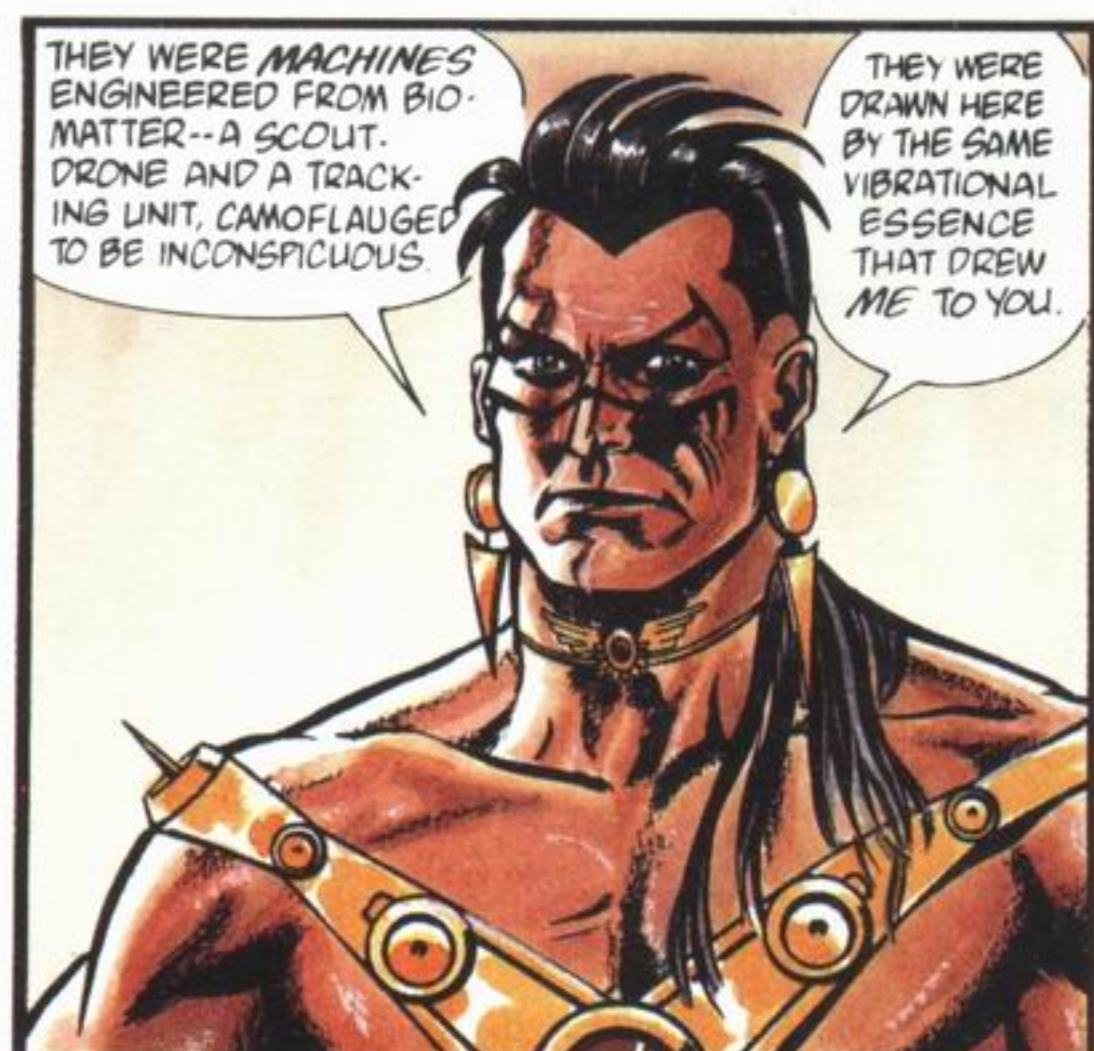
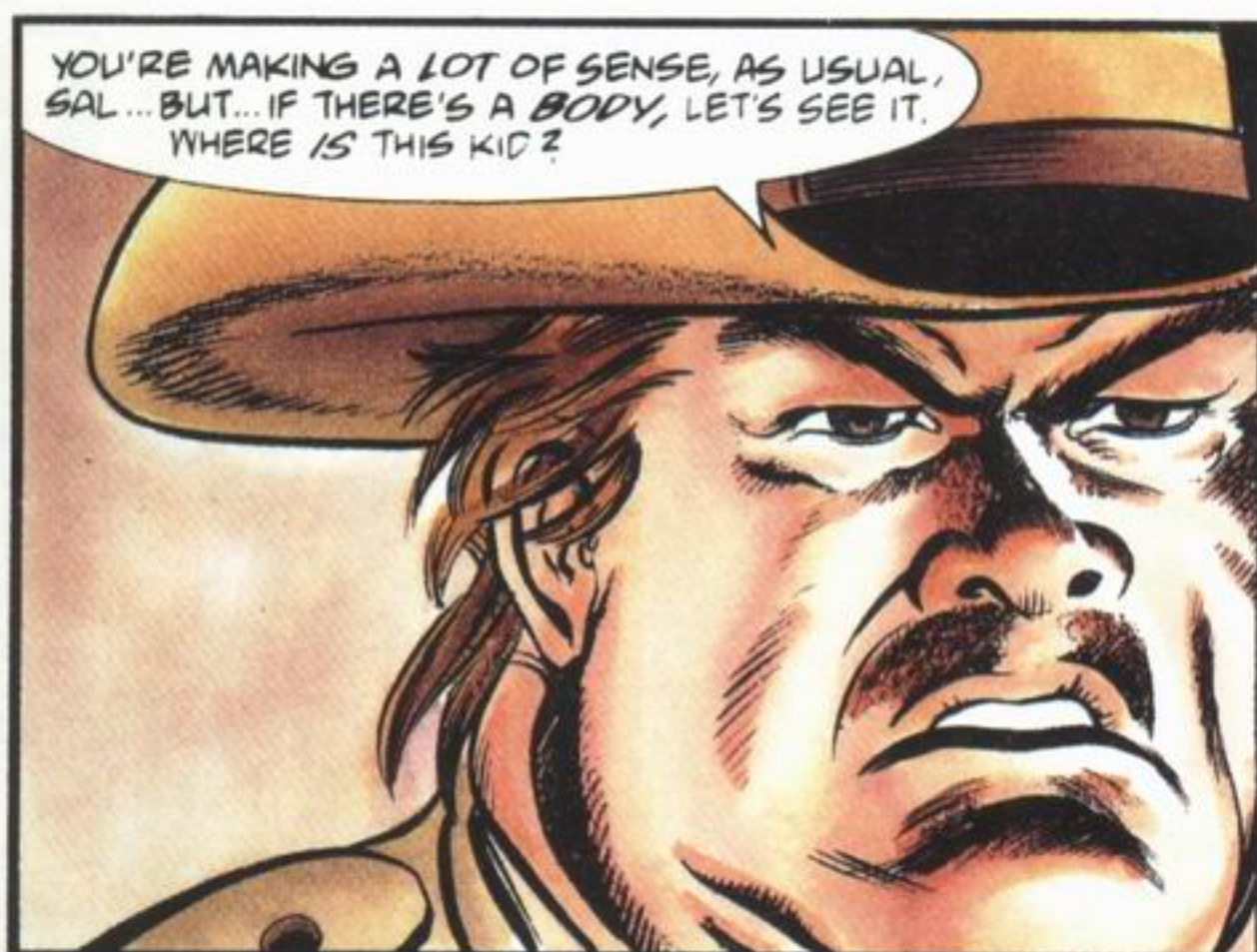
THE REMAINS OF THE HOME
OF SALLY THROCKMORTON
NEAR BOULDER, COLORADO...

DO NOT BE
ALARMED.

DON'T TOUCH ME...
YOU MURDERER!

SAL... I CAN'T
WAIT TO HEAR
WHAT HAPPENED
HERE.

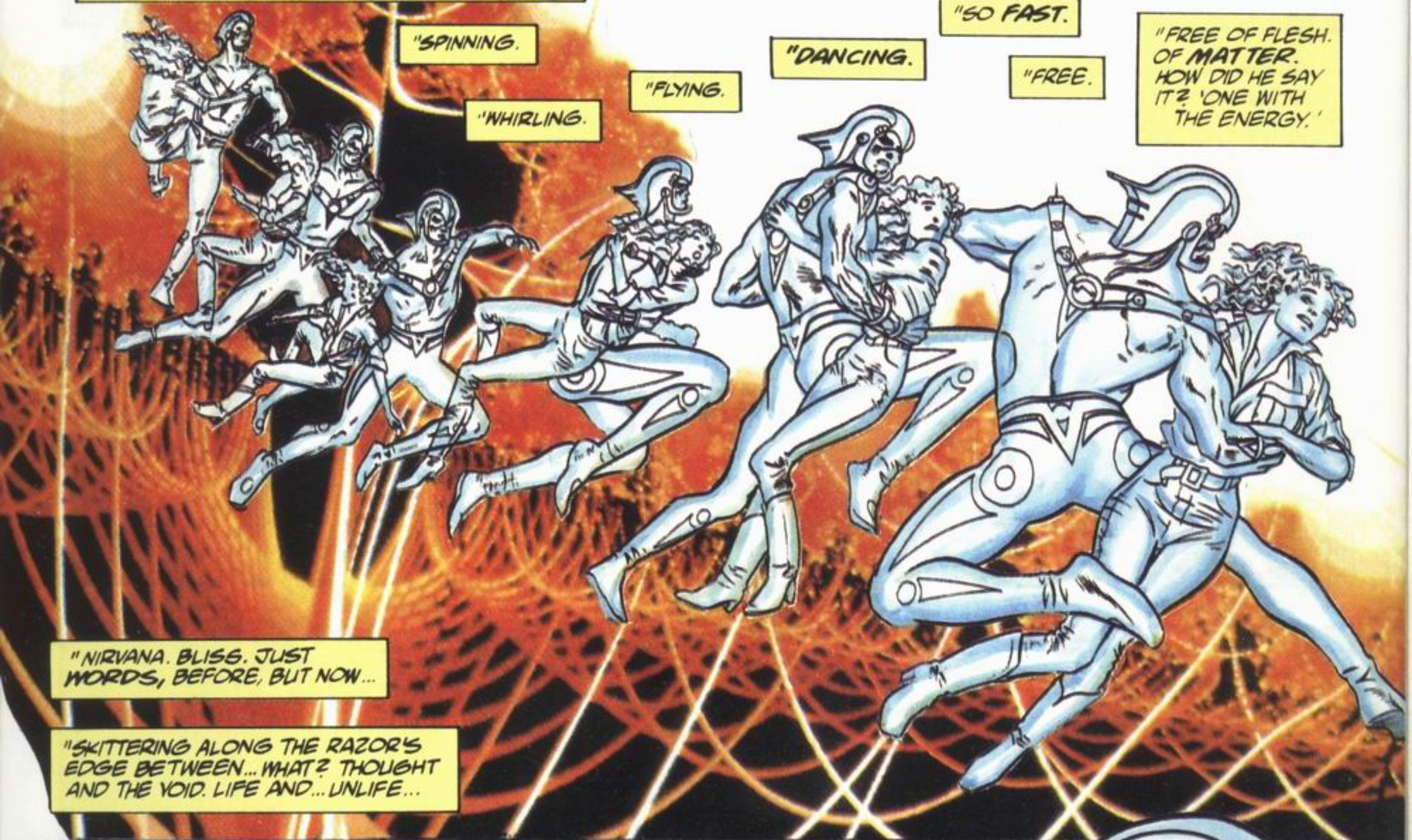
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"HE SCOOPS ME UP, AND SUDDENLY WE'RE..."



"SPINNING."

"DANCING."

"SO FAST."

"FREE OF FLESH.
OF MATTER.
HOW DID HE SAY
IT? 'ONE WITH
THE ENERGY.'"

"FREE."

"FLYING."

"WHIRLING."

"NIRVANA. BLISS. JUST
WORDS, BEFORE, BUT NOW..."

"SKITTERING ALONG THE RAZOR'S
EDGE BETWEEN... WHAT? THOUGHT
AND THE VOID. LIFE AND... UNLIFE..."

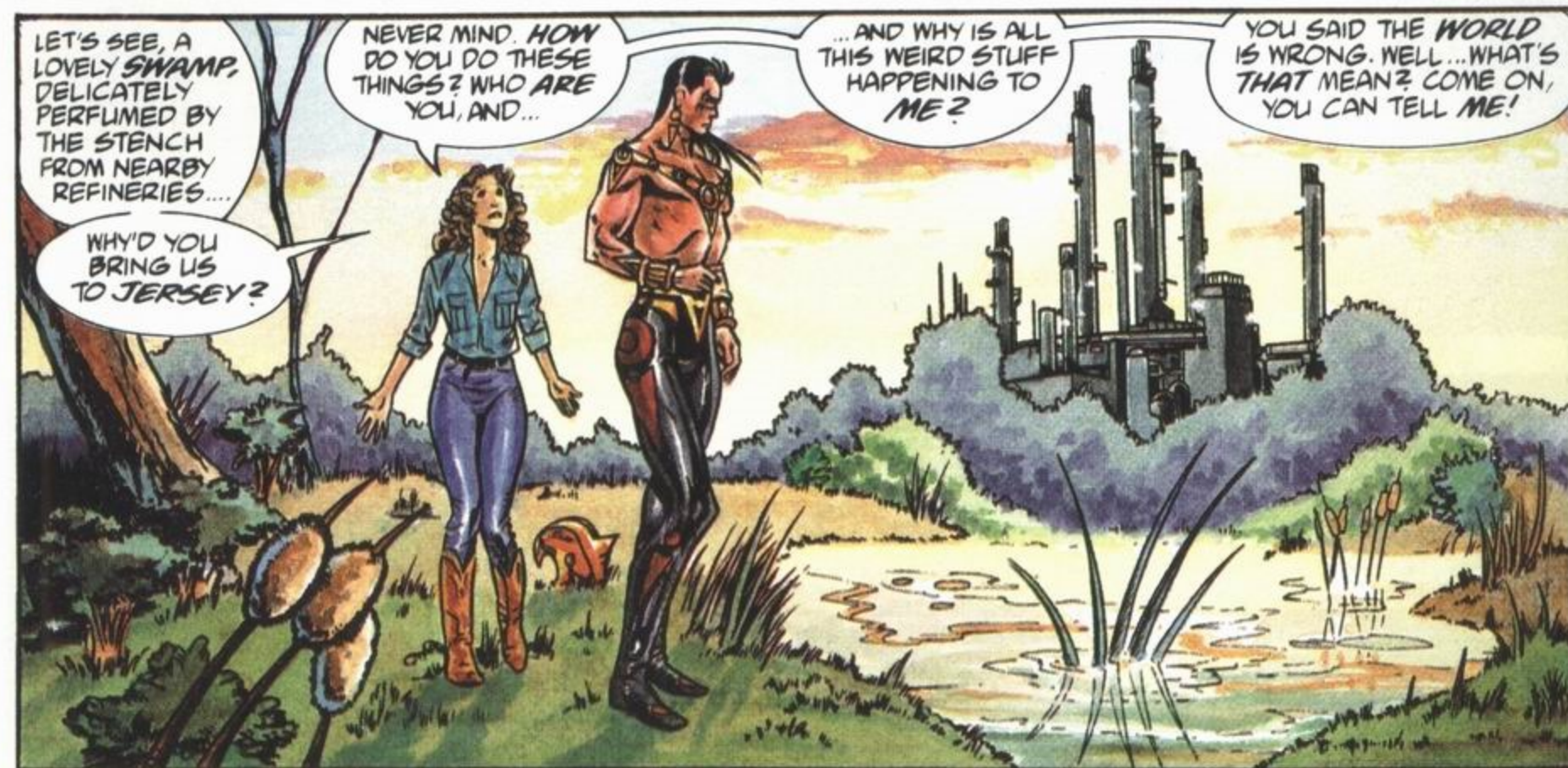
"...CREATION...AND THE
ABSENCE OF CREATION."

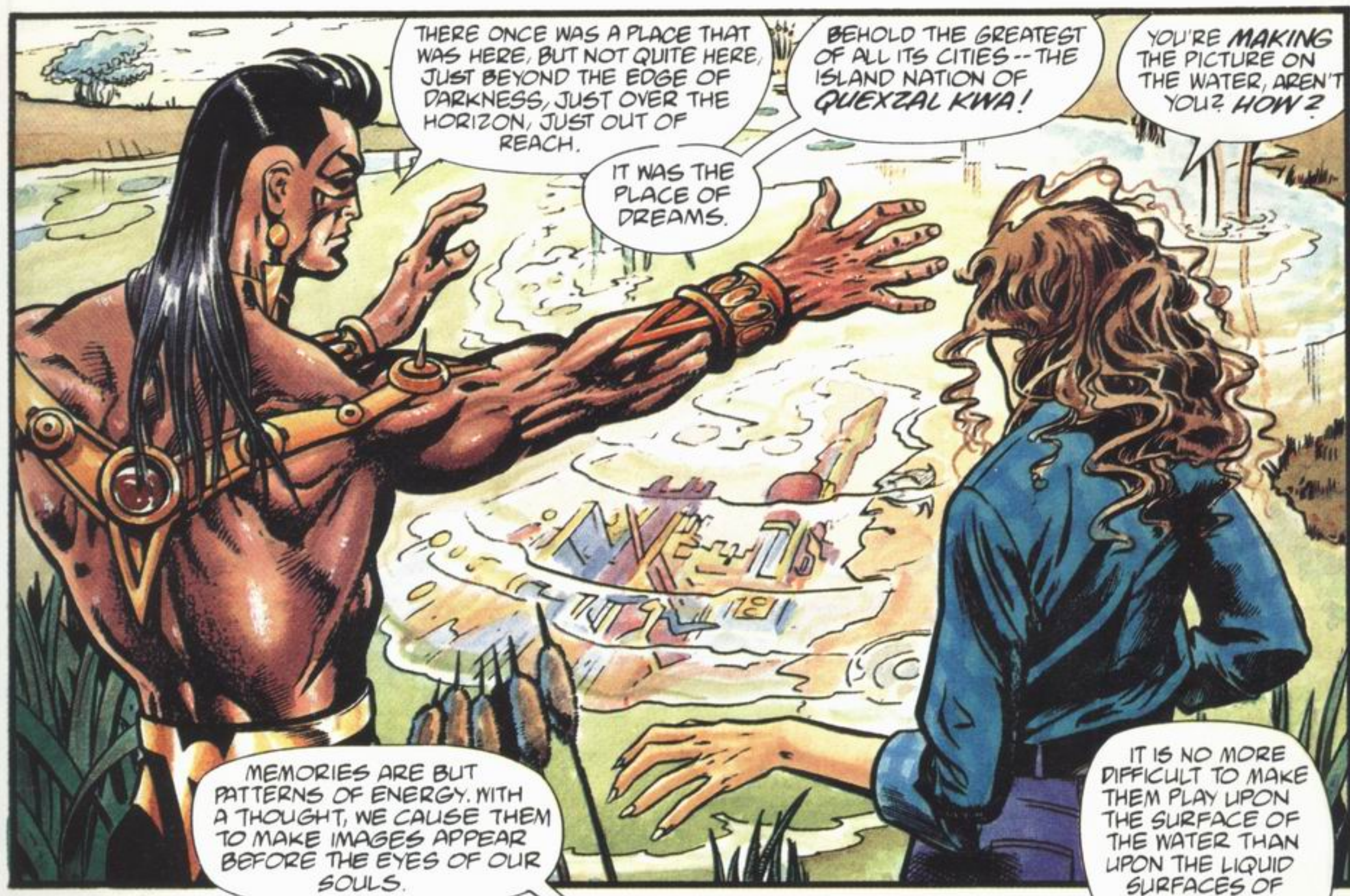
"TRAVELING THROUGH, AMONG,
IN BETWEEN... ALL. ALL THERE IS..."

"...SO FAST, IT'S
ALMOST...RESTFUL."

"OVERWHELMING."



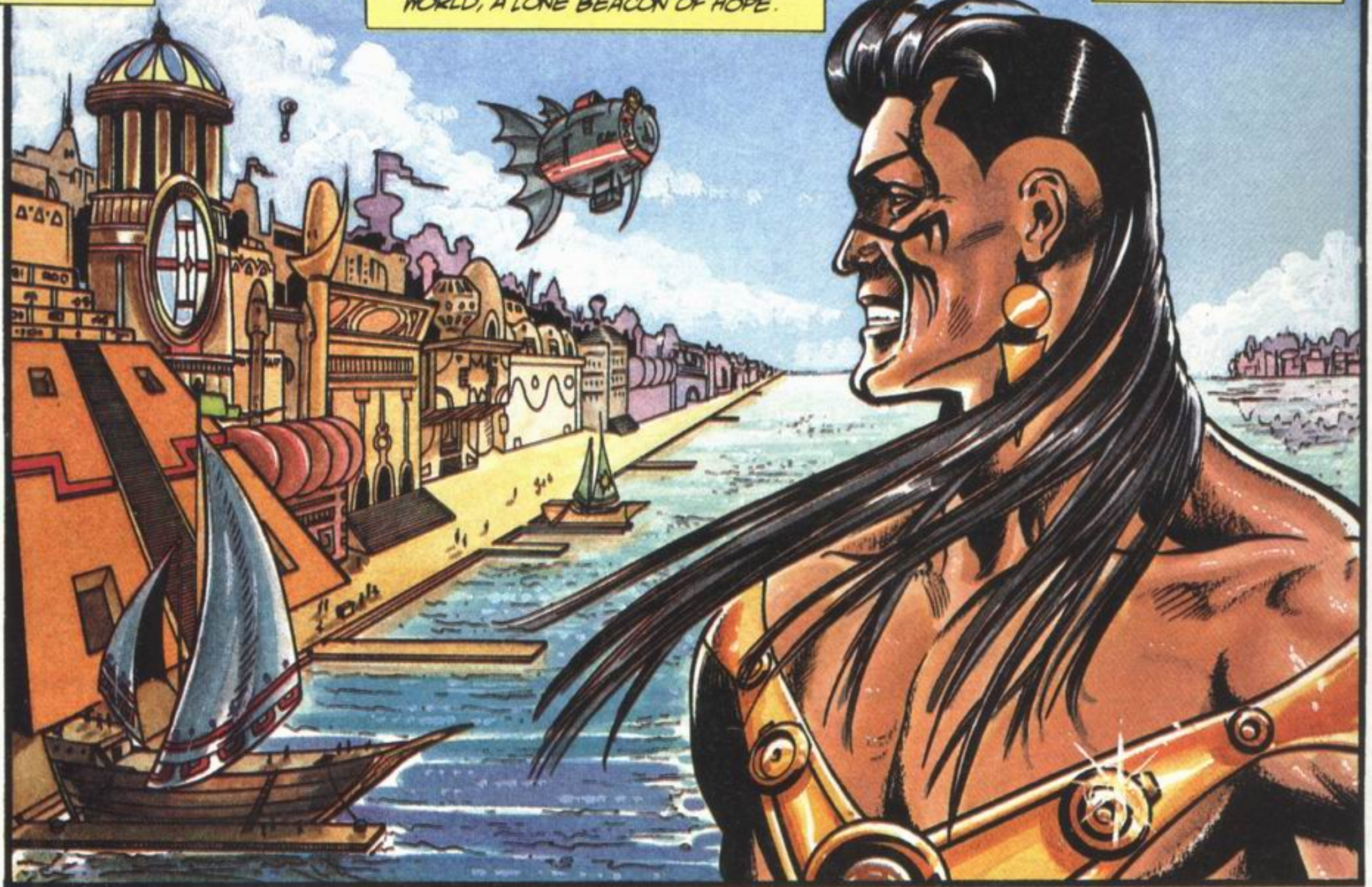




"THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH WERE DARK AND DESPERATE TIMES FOR THE PLACE OF DREAMS..."

"...BUT BEAUTIFUL QUEXZAL KWA SHONE LIKE A STAR AMID THE GLOOM OF THE WORLD, A LONE BEACON OF HOPE."

"I WAS A PRINCE AMONG MY PEOPLE..."



"THUS, I WAS PRIVILEGED TO STUDY THE ARTS OF SCIENCE, MAGIC, LOVE, WAR, AND LORE."

"AS MY WISDOM AND PROWESS GREW, I GAINED GREAT RENOWN THROUGHOUT THE CITY."

"I RECEIVED MUCH PRAISE AND MANY HONORS..."



"...THE GREATEST OF WHICH WAS A GOLDEN HELMET BEARING THE SACRED CREST OF KALAT NEM!"

"THERE WAS TALK AMONG THE LEARNED THAT DESTINY HAD CHOSEN ME TO END THE AGE OF DESPAIR!"



UM... ARE YOU OKAY, AHRQ?

YES...THOUGH TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND YEARS HAVE NOT EASED MY SORROW.





"THERE WAS...NO SORROW FOR ME, THEN. MY PEERS AND I WERE YOUNG!"

"WE LAUGHED, WE PLAYED, WE JOUSTED IN THE SKY! WE WERE FREE!"



"ROMANCE HARMED THE NIGHTS! BEAUTIFUL WERE THE WOMEN OF QUEXZAL KWA!"

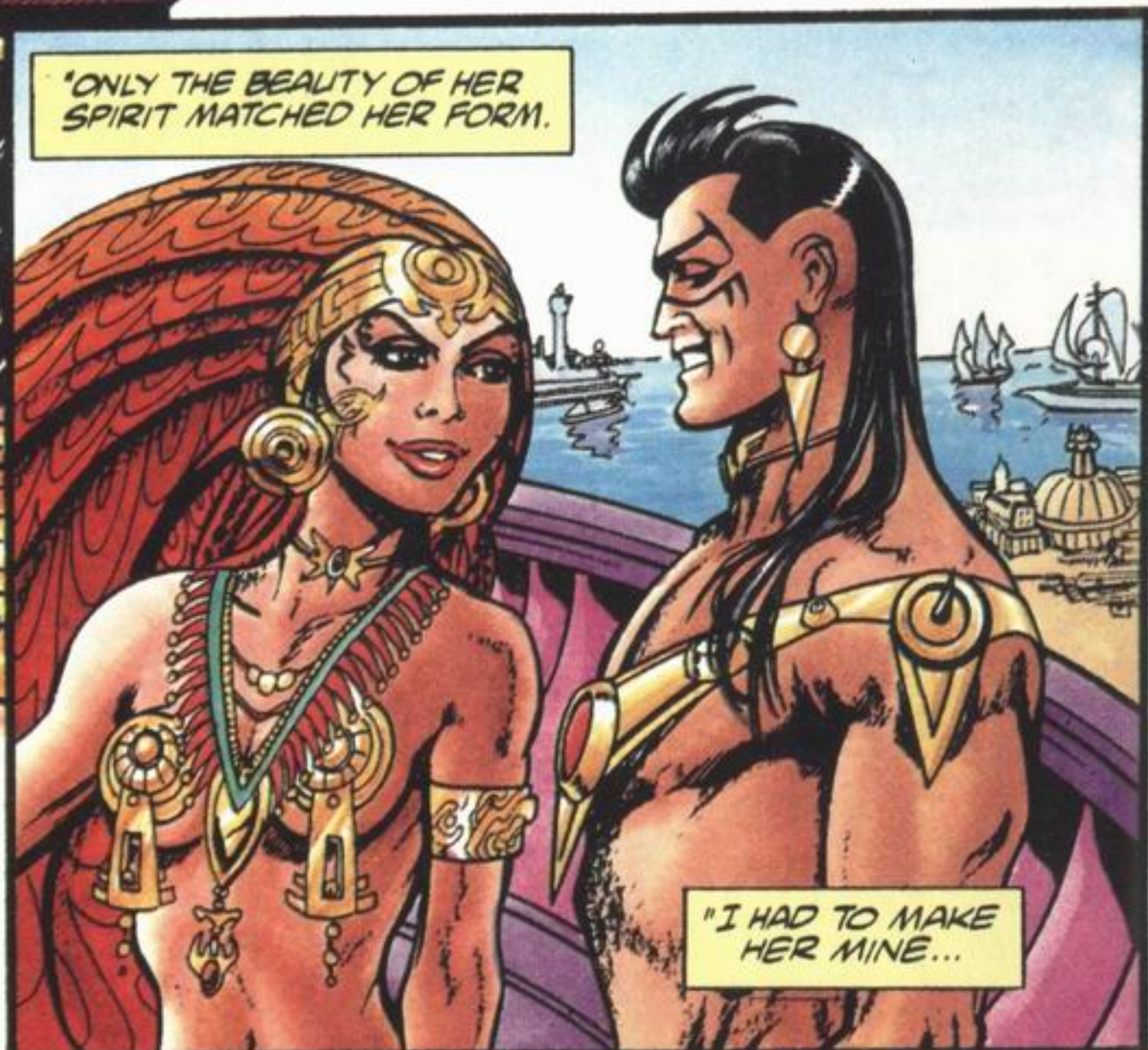
"BUT THERE WAS ONE..."

"HER NAME WAS ZAHNRHEE."

"...BORN TO THE ROYAL HOUSE, HEIRESS TO THE THRONE OF NEM...A SORCERESS AND SCIENTIST WHOSE WISDOM BELIED HER SCANT YEARS."



"SHE WAS BEAUTY."



"ONLY THE BEAUTY OF HER SPIRIT MATCHED HER FORM."

"I HAD TO MAKE HER MINE..."

"...AND I DID. ON THE HAPPIEST DAY OF MY LIFE..."

"...WE WERE WED."

"ALL QUEXZAL KWA REJOICED FOR US, AND THE CELEBRATIONS LINGERED FAR INTO THE NIGHT. BUT AS EVENING SHADOWS DEEPENED, ZAHNRHEE AND I SLIPPED AWAY."

"WE KNEW THAT IN THE UNION OF OUR SPIRITS LAY THE POWER TO SHAKE THE HEAVENS..."

"...AND WE MEANT ON THAT, OUR WEDDING NIGHT, TO CAST A SPELL THAT WOULD BRING AN END TO THE DEATH, DESTRUCTION, AND DESPAIR THAT PLAGUED OUR WORLD."

"BUT SOME ON THE COUNCIL OF WIZARDS FEARED OUR PLAN AND COVETED OUR POWER."

"THEY SOUGHT OUT MY MIGHTIEST RIVAL, THRAHKKAHL..."

"...AND PROMISED HIM RICH REWARDS IF HE WOULD SLAY US...AND HELP THEM USURP OUR MAGICAL ENERGIES."

"IN THE GARDEN COURTYARD, MY LOVE AND I BEGAN OUR SPELL--THE RITUAL DANCE OF TWO."

"THEN, AT THE MOST CRITICAL MOMENT, THE WIZARDS AND THEIR LACKEY STRUCK!"





WHAT HAPPENED?

AT THE LAST MOMENT, THRAHKAHL'S HONOR PREVAILED. HE TURNED ON HIS MASTERS.



AND THEN? COME ON!

THESE MEMORIES ARE...PAINFUL FOR ME. I AM SORRY.

"DESERTED BY THRAHKAHL, IN DESPERATION, THE WIZARDS CONJURED THE MIGHTY FEATHERED SERPENT-- THE VERY SPIRIT OF OUR WORLD!

"THE SERPENT SHATTERED OUR SPELL, DEVoured THE ESSENCE OF MY ONE --MY BEAUTIFUL ZAHNRHEE! --AND SLITHERED BACK TO ITS LAIR.

"UNCONTAINED BY THE PATTERNS OF THE DANCE, THE ENERGY BORN OF THE UNION OF OUR SPIRITS EXPLODED.

"ATTEMPTING TO CHANNEL IT INTO THEMSELVES, THE FOOLHARDY WIZARDS WERE BOILED AWAY INTO VAPOR.



"ALONG WITH THE WICKED DIED QUEXZAL KWA, RAVAGED BY THE MAELSTROM OF SEARING FORCE UNTIL ITS BURNING REMAINS WERE SWALLOWED BY THE SEA.

"AND I? MY FLESH MELTED INTO ENERGY. MY SPIRIT WAS HURLED INTO THE VOID, TOSSED BY THE CURRENTS OF ENDLESS ENERGY, A CAPTIVE OF CHAOS.



"I WAS EMPTINESS...PAIN... FEAR... LONELINESS...

"BUT AFTER THE MILENNIUM, I LEARNED TO SENSE THE VIBRATIONS, FEEL THE RHYTHMS --AND DANCE THE DANCE OF THE INFINITE.



"THE DANCE ...IS BLISS."



IT WAS...HOW CAN I DESCRIBE IT?!

WELL, IF IT WAS ANYTHING LIKE THE RIDE YOU GAVE ME...



BETTER, I BET. RIGHT?

ONLY THE VOICE OF ZAHNRHEE CALLING MY NAME COULD HAVE DRAWN ME AWAY. IF THE MEREST WHISPER OF HER SPIRIT ENDURES...

I MUST FIND HER!

SO...YOU THOUGHT YOU HEARD HER VOICE COMING FROM MY DIRECTION... AND YOU TURNED UP ON YOUR PYRAMID--

THE TEMPLE OF NEM... I THOUGHT OF IT AS I COALESCED, AND SO IT, TOO, APPEARED IN SUBSTANCE.

ZAHNRHEE IS OF THE HOUSE OF NEM.

AND YOU... ARE MOST CERTAINLY NOT.



WHY WAS I DRAWN TO YOU? WHERE IS ZAHNRHEE, IF SHE YET EXISTS?

THOUGH MY HEART ACHES TO SEARCH FOR THE ANSWERS...

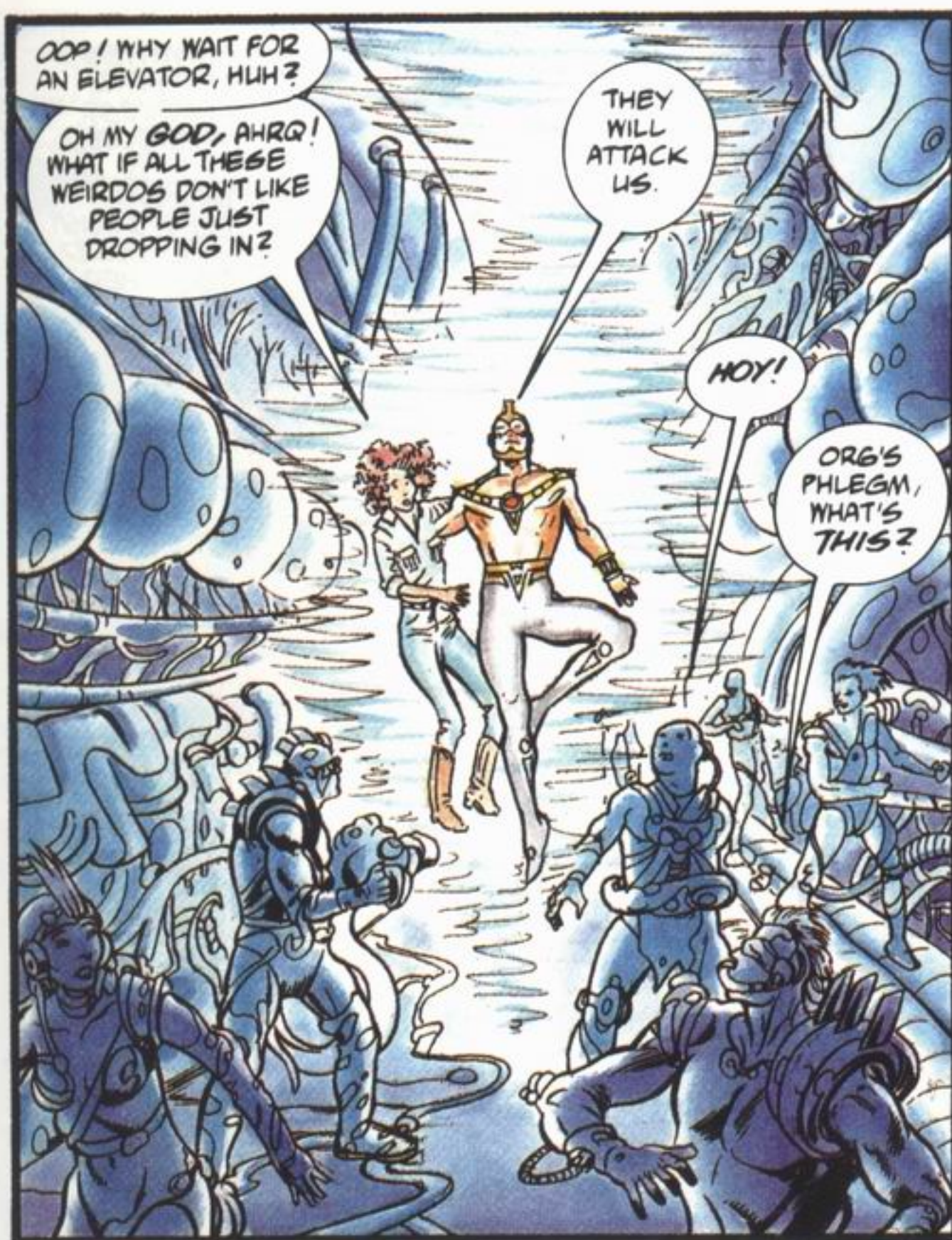
...FIRST I MUST DEAL WITH THE MATTER AT HAND.



WHAT? THOSE WEIRDOS WHO ATTACKED US? ARE THEY FROM JERSEY?

THEY ARE FROM THE WORLD THAT ONCE KNEW THE GLORY OF QUEXZAL KWA. THEY ARE FROM THE PLACE OF DREAMS. THEY DO NOT BELONG HERE.

THEIR NEST IS BELOW. COME.



OOP! WHY WAIT FOR AN ELEVATOR, HUH?

OH MY GOD, AHRG! WHAT IF ALL THESE WEIRDOS DON'T LIKE PEOPLE JUST DROPPING IN?

THEY WILL ATTACK US.

HOY!

ORG'S PHLEGM, WHAT'S THIS?



IT'S HIM! THE ONE WHO THRASHWHIPPED OUR TASK FORCE!

GET HIM!



STAY CLOSE TO ME.

YOU BET!

DO NOT FEAR, SAH-LEE. I HAVE INCREASED MY VIBRATIONAL FREQUENCY...



...TO GIVE ME ENOUGH POWER TO HOLD THEM AT BAY...

...WHILE I EXAMINE THEIR EQUIPMENT.

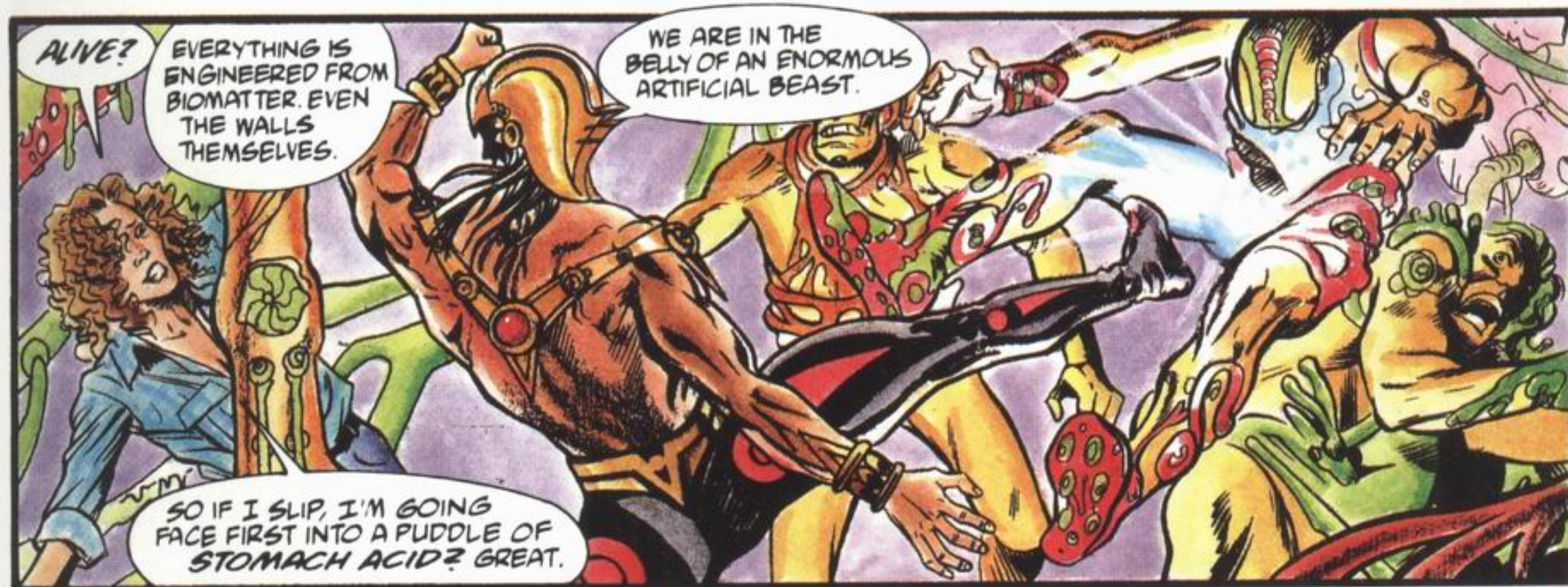
IT SMELLS FUNNY HERE. AND EVERYTHING IS WET. *SLIMY.*



LIKE IT'S COVERED WITH *MUCUS*! YUCK!

EVERYTHING HERE IS ALIVE.

OWW!



ALIVE?

EVERYTHING IS ENGINEERED FROM BIOMATTER. EVEN THE WALLS THEMSELVES.

WE ARE IN THE BELLY OF AN ENORMOUS ARTIFICIAL BEAST.

SO IF I SLIP, I'M GOING FACE FIRST INTO A PUDDLE OF *STOMACH ACID*? GREAT.

WHOO! I NEVER THOUGHT SWAMP AIR WOULD SMELL SO SWEET! WHY DID YOU TAKE ME DOWN THERE?

YOU ASKED TO COME WITH ME.

I WANTED TO GET AWAY FROM THE LAST MESS, NOT--OH, NEVER MIND. DID YOU FIND OUT WHAT YOU WANTED?

NOT LONG AGO, AN ARMY CAME HERE FROM THE PLACE OF DREAMS TO CONQUER YOUR WORLD. FIVE OF YOUR MIGHTIEST DROVE THEM BACK.

BUT SOME OF THE INVADERS WERE SCATTERED...LOST...**STRANDED** HERE. THEY HIDE BELOW, EVER SEEKING A WAY TO GO HOME.

WHY'D THEY LOOK *ME* UP?

THEY, TOO, HEARD THE VOICE OF ZAHNRHEE.

OH, AND SINCE SHE'S FROM THE SAME ZIP CODE AS THEY ARE...YEAH, MAKES SENSE.

WELL...NO **PROBLEM**. YOU CAN JUST DANCE EVERYBODY BACK WHERE THEY BELONG, RIGHT?

NO. SOMETHING DARK AND HORRIBLE HAS HAPPENED TO THE PLACE OF DREAMS. AND IF **DREAMS** WALK THE EARTH, THERE IS **GREAT DANGER** TO ALL EXISTENCE!

I MUST EXAMINE THIS PLANET...LEARN THE EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE. COME.

UH...**NO**...NO, THANKS. COULD YOU JUST DROP ME OFF SOMEPLACE?

THINK OF WHERE YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE.

PERFECT. WALK ME IN?

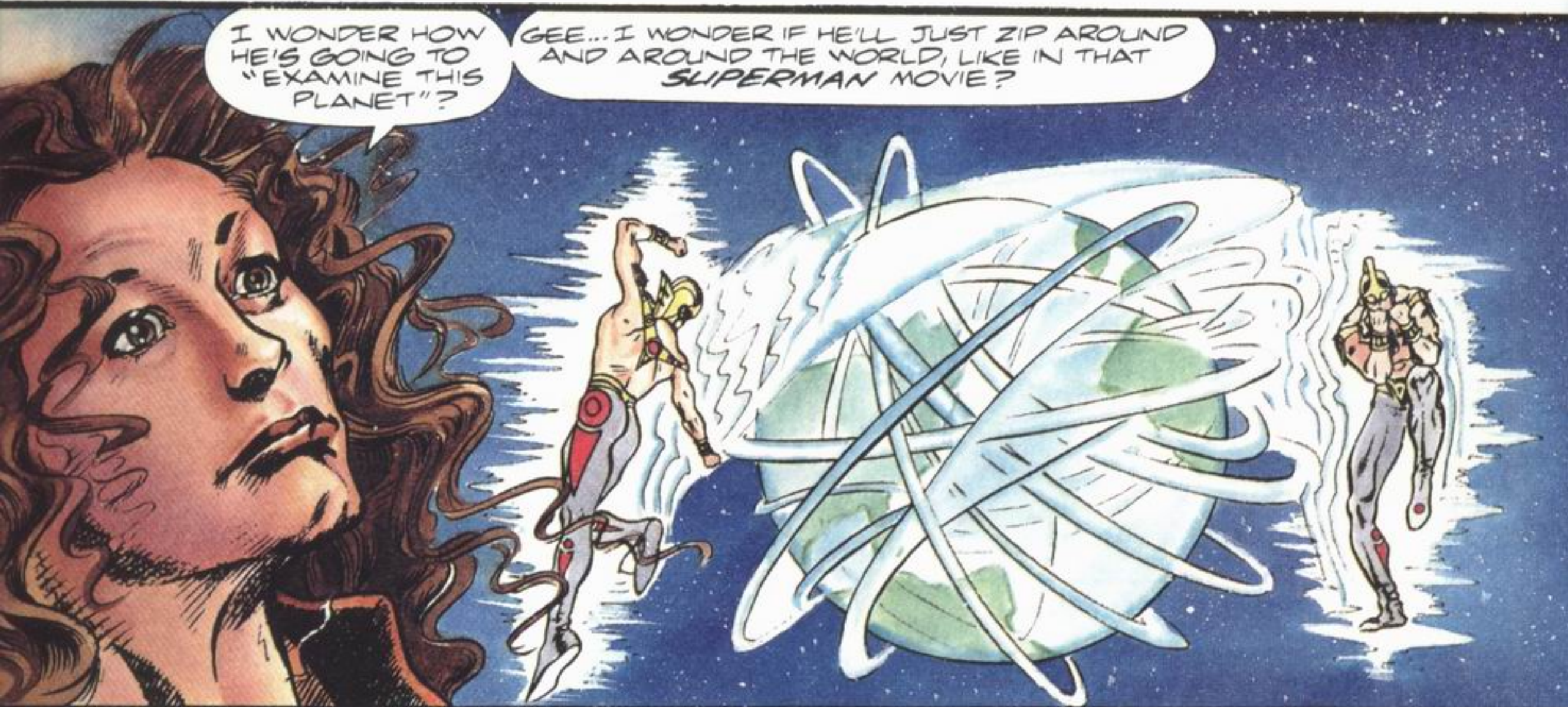
THANKS, AHRQ. UM, BEFORE YOU GO...JUST WHAT IS THE "GREAT DANGER"?

I AM.

OH.

WHO'S THE GUY IN THE HELMET?

HIM? JUST A GODLIKE BEING FROM ANOTHER WORLD. FRIEND OF MINE. NICE BUNS, HUH?



I WONDER HOW HE'S GOING TO "EXAMINE THIS PLANET"?

GEE... I WONDER IF HE'LL JUST ZIP AROUND AND AROUND THE WORLD, LIKE IN THAT *SUPERMAN* MOVIE?



EXCUSE ME, BUT WERE YOU TALKING TO ME?

NO, MYSELF. IT'S A LONG STORY, AND IT'S SO BIZARRE IT MAKES ME FEEL NORMAL.



MEANWHILE, IN A LOCKER ROOM AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN...

THOSE JERKS OVER IN JERSEY ARE GOING TO BLOW OUR COVER, SPEARS.

YEAH.

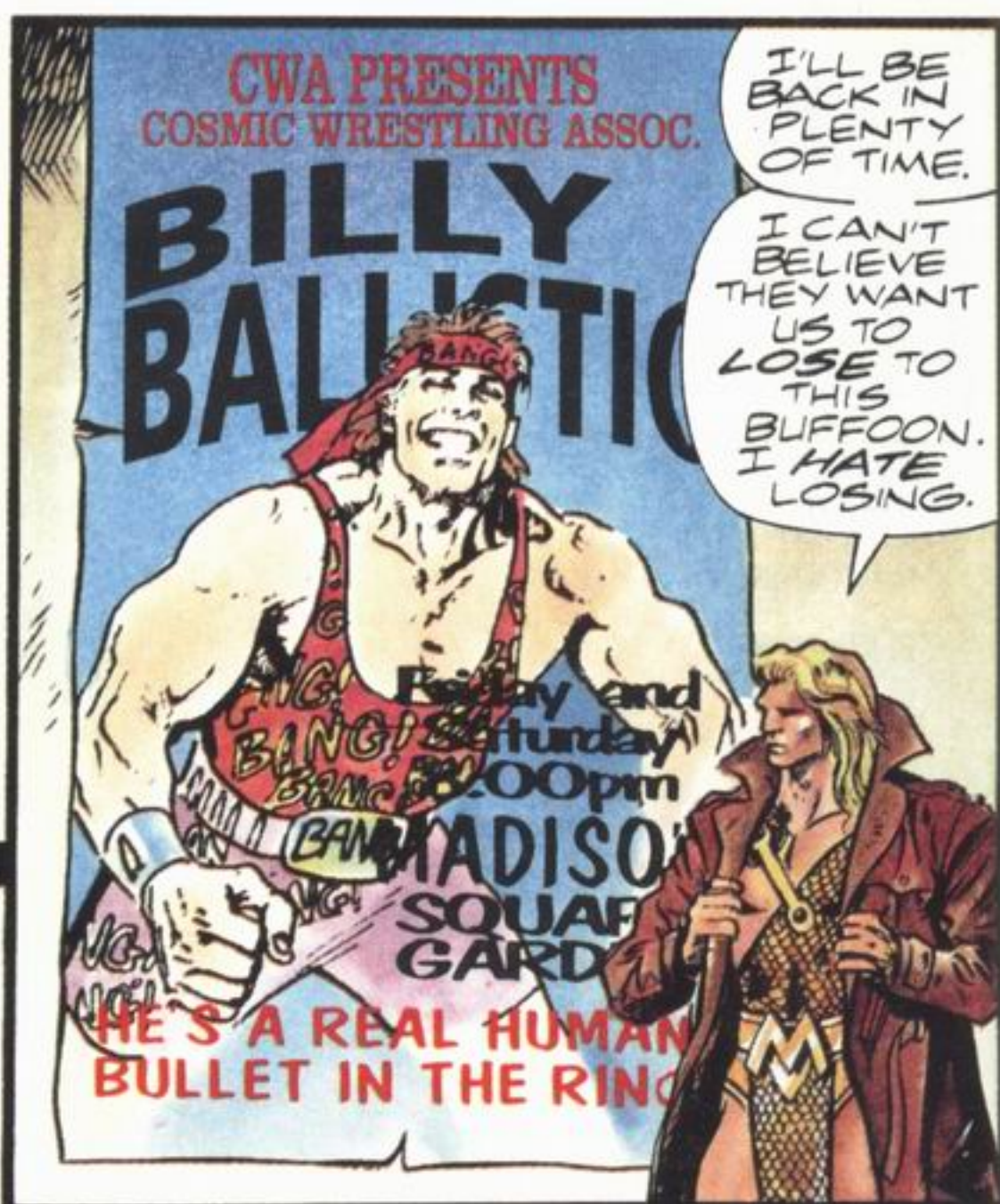


THEY KEEP SCREWING UP, MAKING A SPECTACLE OF THEMSELVES, AND LEAVING EVIDENCE AROUND.

YEAH. WHY DON'T THEY JUST BLEND IN, LIKE US, AND MAKE THE BEST OF IT?

I OUGHT TO GO OVER THERE AND THRASHWHIP THOSE IDIOTS.

DON'T FORGET WE'VE GOT A MATCH TONIGHT.



I'LL BE BACK IN PLENTY OF TIME.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY WANT US TO LOSE TO THIS BUFFOON. I HATE LOSING.

**CWA PRESENTS
COSMIC WRESTLING ASSOC.
BILLY BALLISTIC**

Friday and Saturday
8:00pm
MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

HE'S A REAL HUMAN BULLET IN THE RING

LATER...

HMP. STILL NO TRACE OF HIM. IT'S AS IF THE INTRUDER VANISHED.

ASK THE HIDEAWAY TO KEEP ITS SENSES ALERT. IF HE COMES BACK, I WANT SOME WARNING!

SEAL THE CARAPACE!

HOY, WHO'S THAT?

HALT! HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?

I KNOW THE WAY.

CENTURION MASSAC?! WE THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!

HARDLY. *SPEERAX* AND I DECIDED TO GO NATIVE.

BETTER THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE, *BILEUS*.

NICE JOB OF GENETIC REENGINEERING, MASSAC.

NOW LISTEN-- I SAW A REPORT ON *CNN* ABOUT A HOUSE IN COLORADO THAT WAS MYSTERIOUSLY TRASHED...

EVEN ON THE CRUDE T.V. SYSTEM THEY HAVE HERE, I COULD TELL IT WAS THE WORK OF YOUR TROOPS.

NO ONE BELIEVES THAT "REPEATED LIGHTNING STRIKES" NONSENSE. THERE'S BOUND TO BE AN INVESTIGATION.

IDIOTS! THERE'S NO WAY HOME UNLESS SOMEONE COMES TO GET US... AND IF THEY WERE COMING, THEY'D HAVE BEEN HERE BY NOW!

IF YOU WANT TO LAY LOW QUIETLY AND WAIT, FINE.

WE WERE JUST SEARCHING FOR A WAY HOME, MASSAC. YOU SHOULD BE HELPING US.

AGGH!

WHULL!

STIR UP A WITCH-HUNT AND I'LL TWISTRIIP YOU ALL!

ORG'S PHLEGM!



I HAVE
COME
FOR YOU.

I CHALLENGE
YOU TO SINGLE
COMBAT, TO
THE DEATH.

WHO THE SLIMPS
ARE YOU?

OH, NEVER
MIND. I
DON'T CARE.

JUDGING FROM
YOUR ENTRANCE,
I'D SAY YOU'RE
NO LIGHTWEIGHT.



BUT I'VE GOT A
LITTLE SOMETHING
HERE...



GOOD
STUFF...

REACTS WITH MY
REENGINEERED
PHYSIOLOGY...



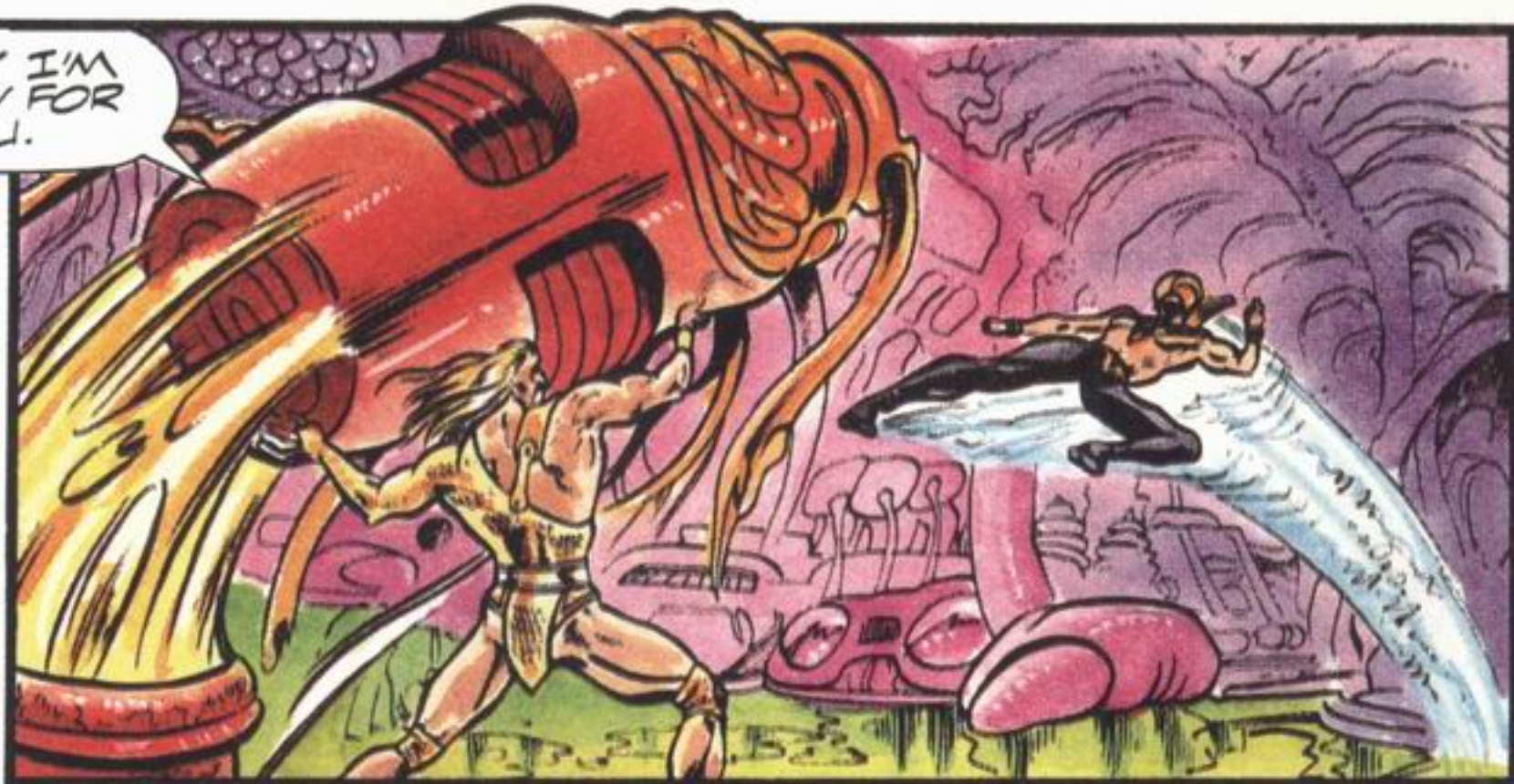
AH!

GIVES YOU
A JOLT...



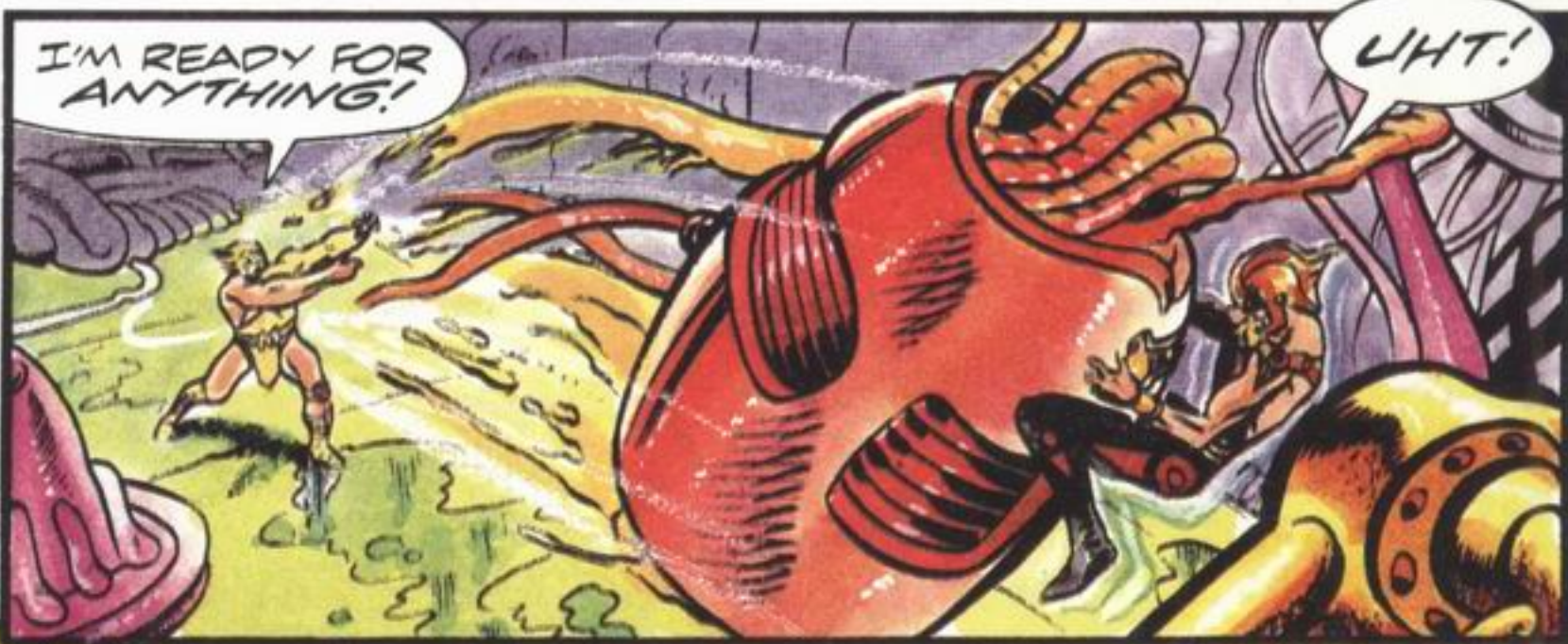
YEAH...
YEAH!

NOW I'M
READY FOR
YOU.



I'M READY FOR
ANYTHING!

UHT!





AH! I UNDERSTAND.
I WAS A SCIENTIST
BEFORE I WAS BECOME
A GOD.



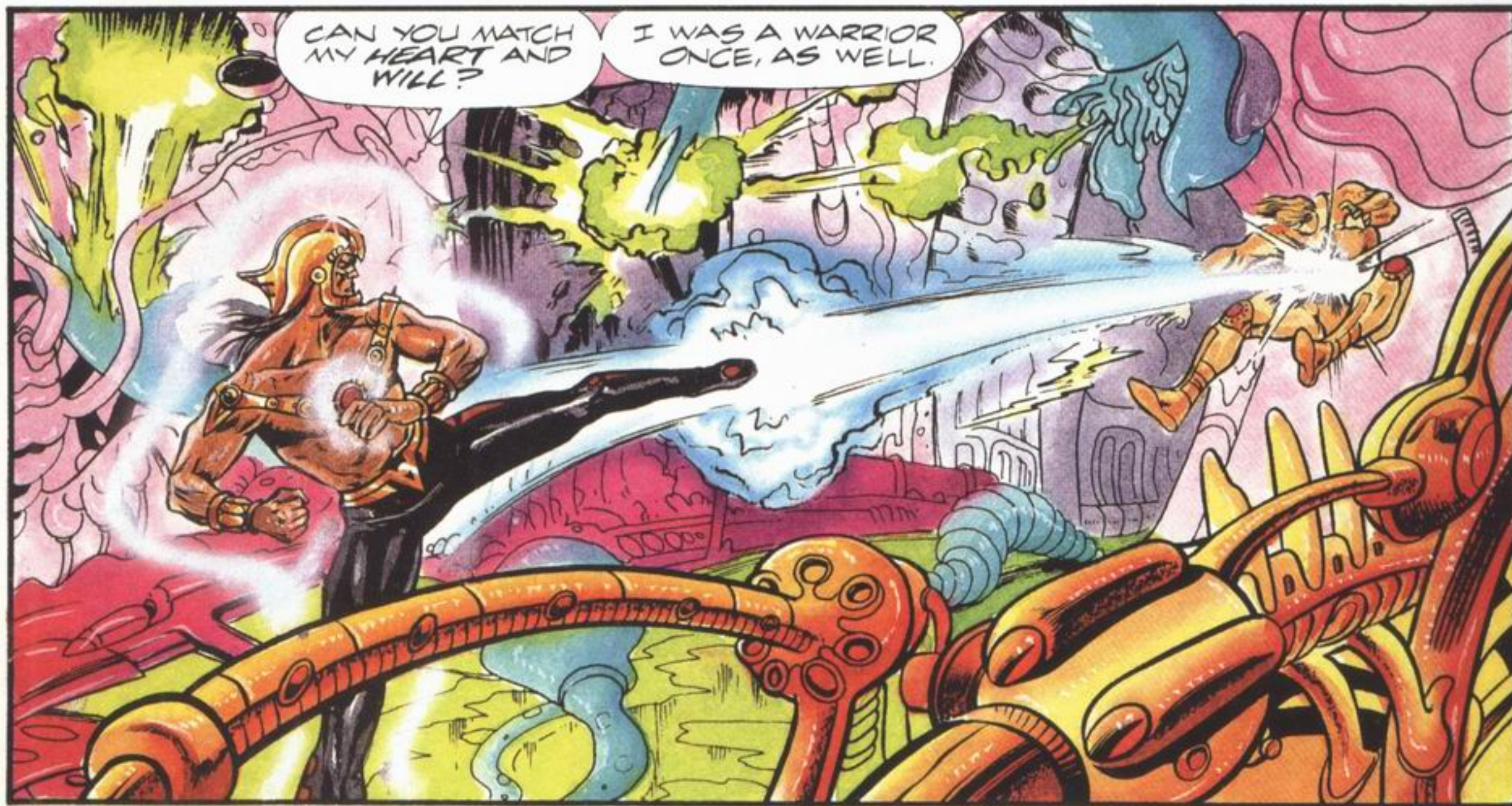
YOUR ID-REAGENTS AROUSE THE SUBCONSCIOUS
TO MAGNIFY THE STRENGTH OF YOUR FLESH... AND
SO YOU ARE POWERFUL.



BUT I AM
WHAT I
CHOOSE
TO BE.



I CHOOSE
TO MATCH
YOUR
STRENGTH.



CAN YOU MATCH
MY HEART AND
WILL?

I WAS A WARRIOR
ONCE, AS WELL.



YOU MUST BE ONE OF US... REENGINEERED TO LOOK NATIVE. YOU CAN'T BE A NATIVE. NATIVES HERE CAN'T DO ANYTHING.



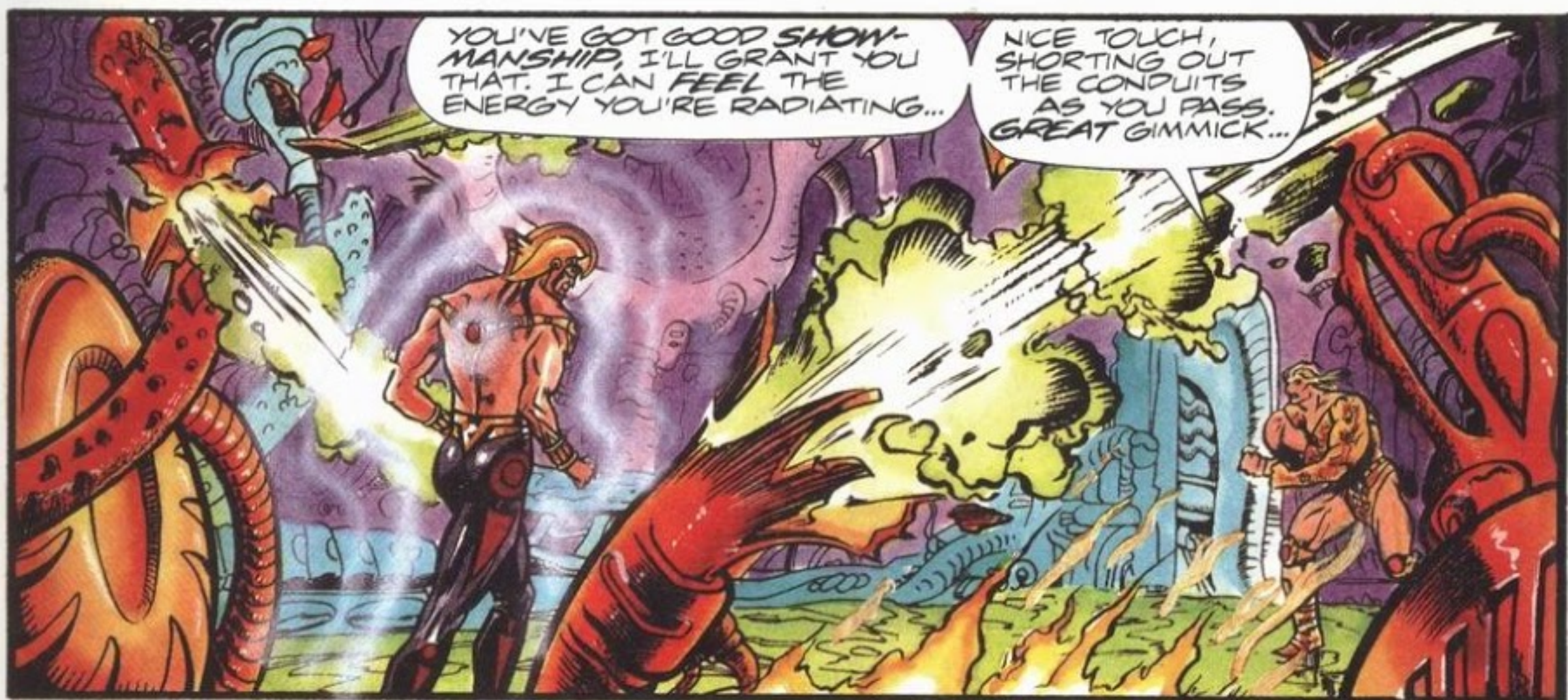
IT'S LIKE YOU SAID, I JUST JUICE UP ON PSYCHO-STEROIDS...



...AND TURN AGGRESSION INTO BEEF.

AND I'VE GOT LOTS OF AGGRESSION!

AHH... YOU CAN DO AMAZING THINGS WITH A BODY LIKE THIS...! THE NATIVES HAVE NO IDEA...!

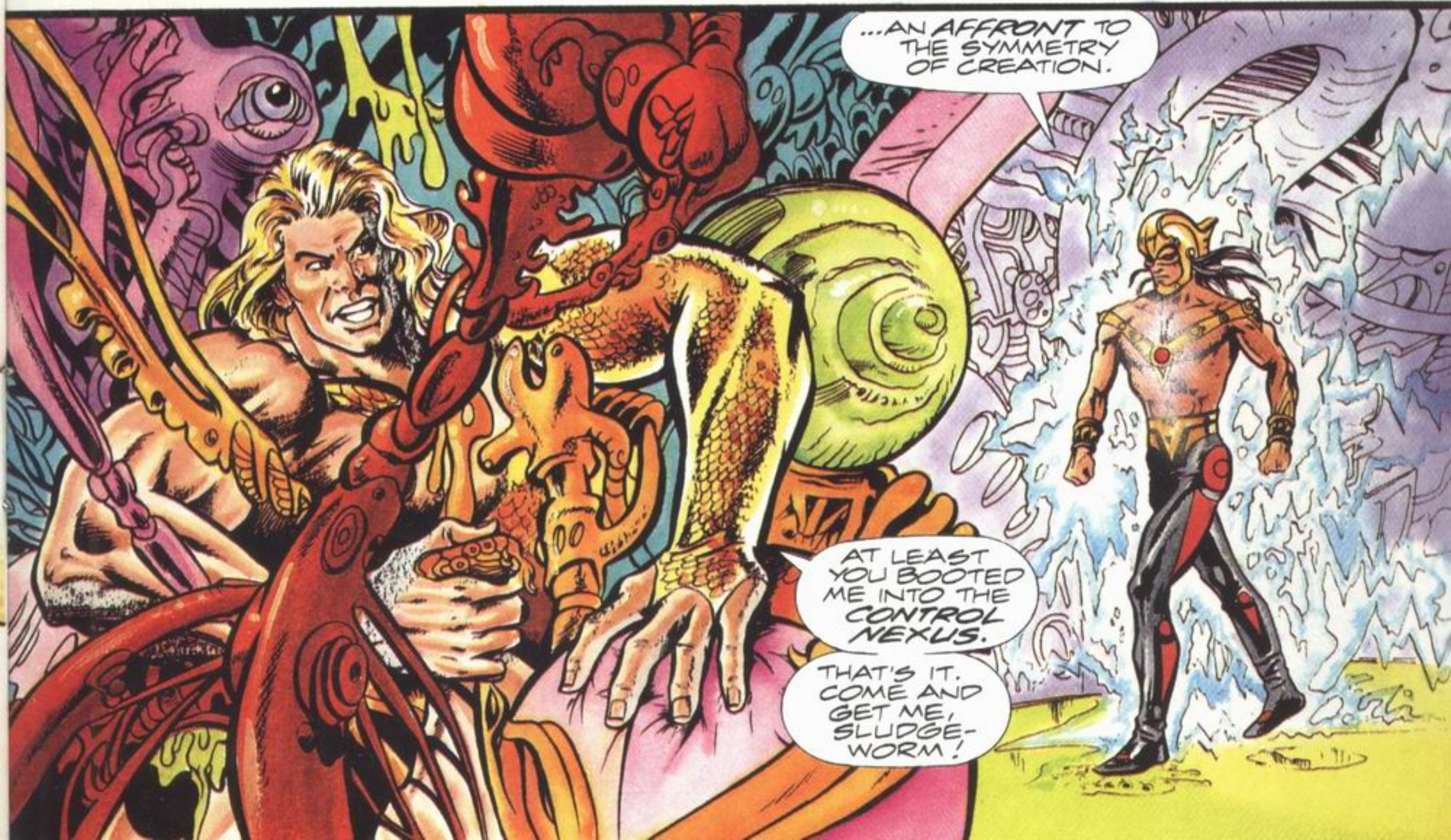
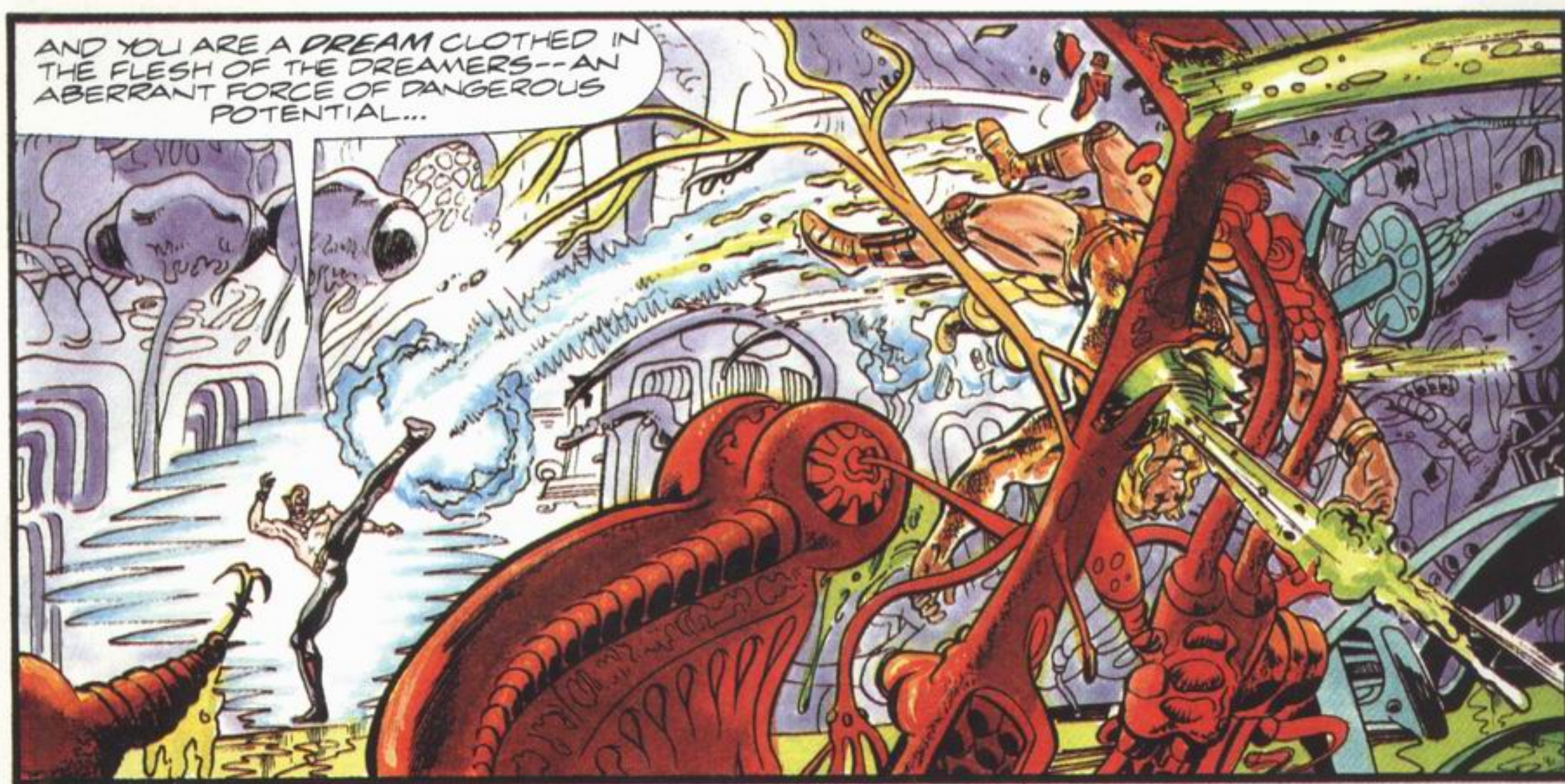


YOU'VE GOT GOOD SHOW-MANSHIP, I'LL GRANT YOU THAT. I CAN FEEL THE ENERGY YOU'RE RADIATING...

NICE TOUCH, SHORTING OUT THE CONDUITS AS YOU PASS. GREAT GIMMICK...



... BUT MINE'S BETTER!





GOTCHA!

UHT!



I HAVE SEEN TREACHERY ONCE ALREADY SINCE I RETURNED TO SUBSTANCE. THIS TIME I WAS READY.

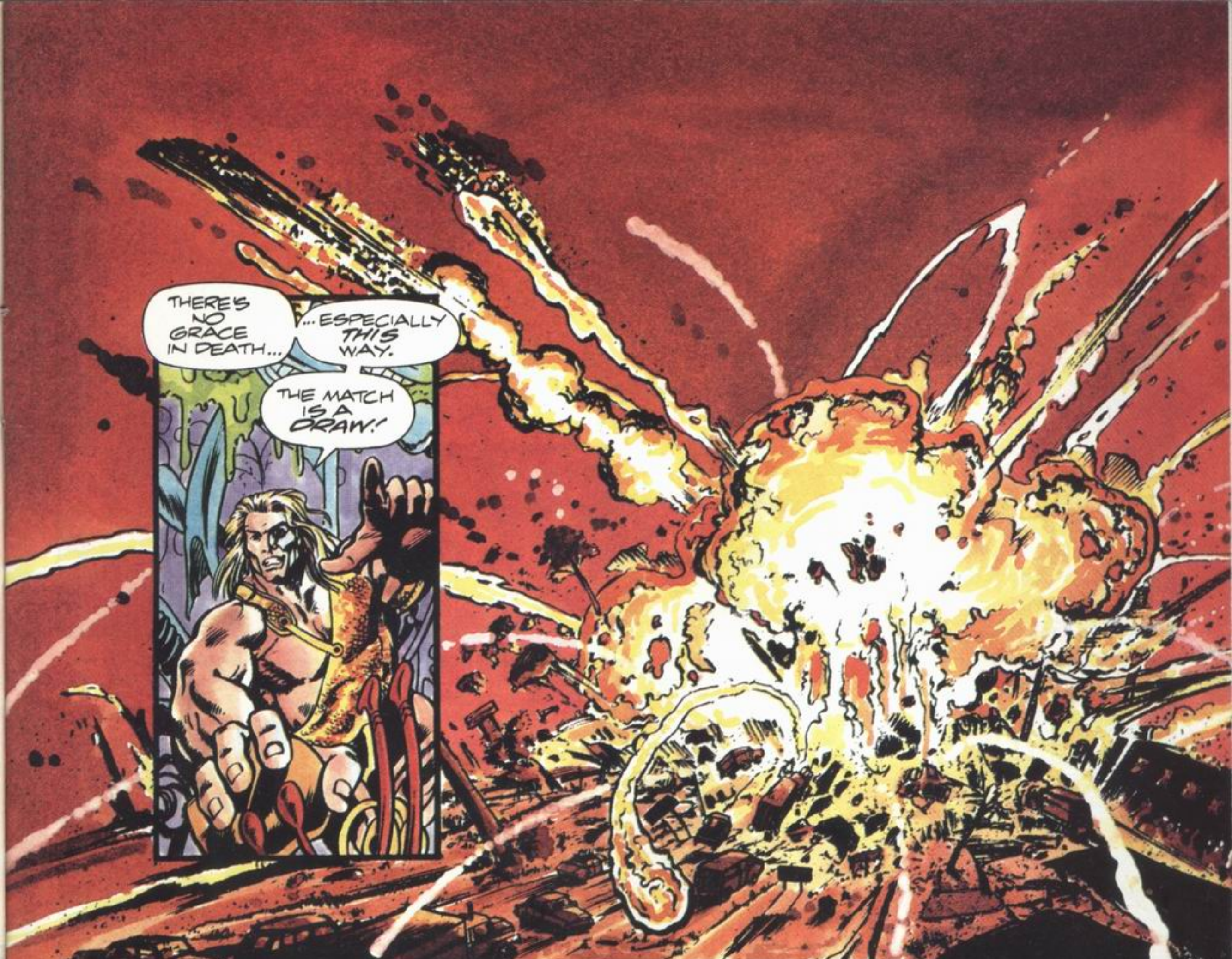
YEAH? WELL I'VE FOUND THE **DESTRUCT** TRIGGER. I'LL BLOW THIS WHOLE HIDEAWAY TO ATOMS... KILL US BOTH. I'M NOT BLUFFING.



I HATE TO LOSE.




THE COMBAT IS OVER. RISE WITH HONOR AND ACCEPT YOUR DEATH WITH GRACE.




THERE'S
NO
GRACE
IN DEATH...

...ESPECIALLY
THIS
WAY.


THE MATCH
IS A
DRAW!



NO LIFE
FREQUENCY.
DEAD.



THE
CLEANSING
OF THE
WORLD OF
DREAMERS
HAS BEGUN.
THE FIRST
OBJECTIVE
IS MET...



...PERHAPS
IT IS NOT
TOO LATE.

SO
MUCH
DAMAGE....!



COUNTED
ME OUT
TOO
SOON!...

HTT!



AHH!

BODY DIED...
BUT I BROUGHT
IT BACK!

YOU WERE RIGHT,
WORM. THERE'S
POWER IN ME
EVEN DEATH CAN'T
STOP.



YOUR POWER...
IS GONE!

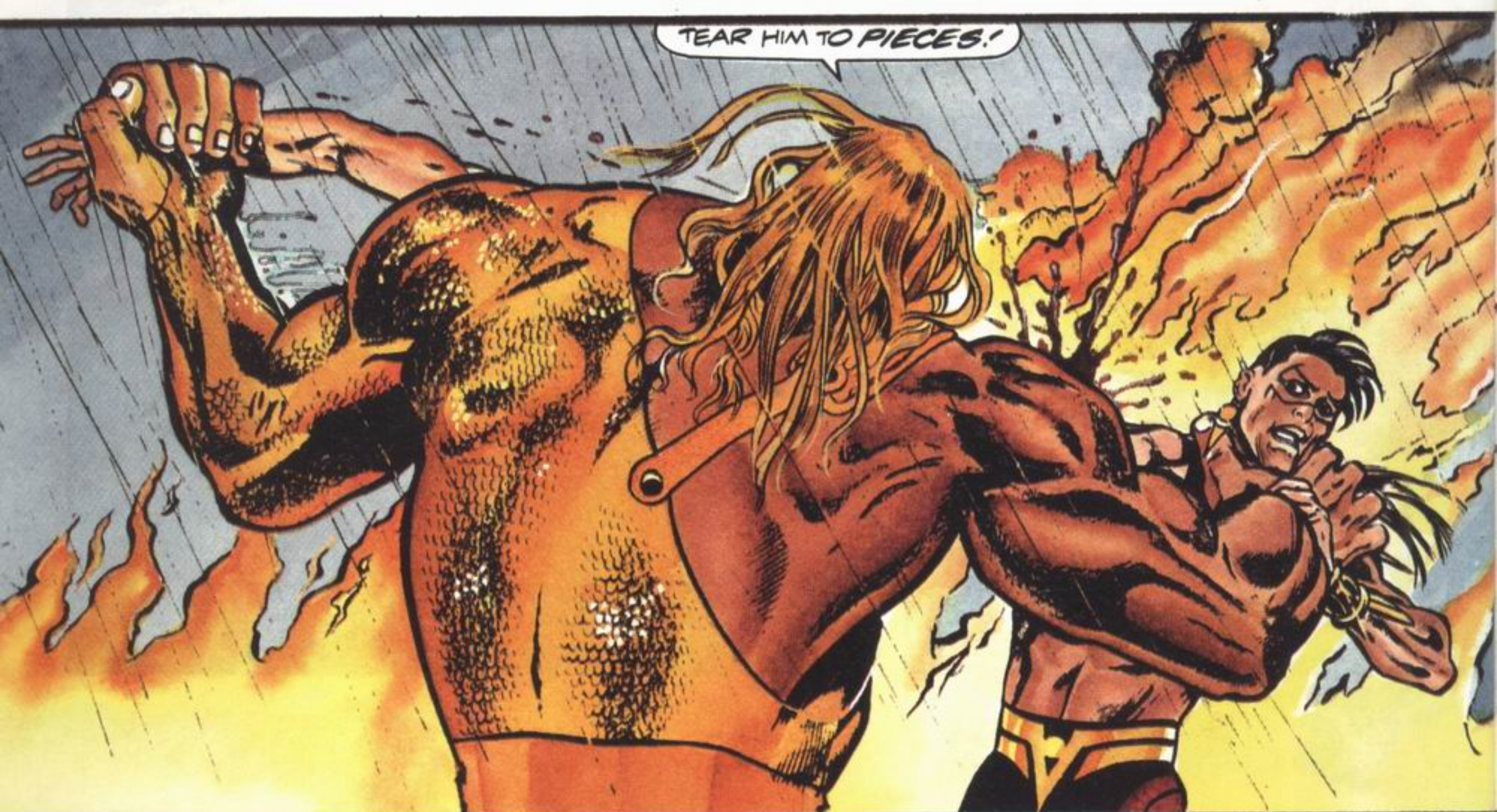
YOU LET IT
FADE.



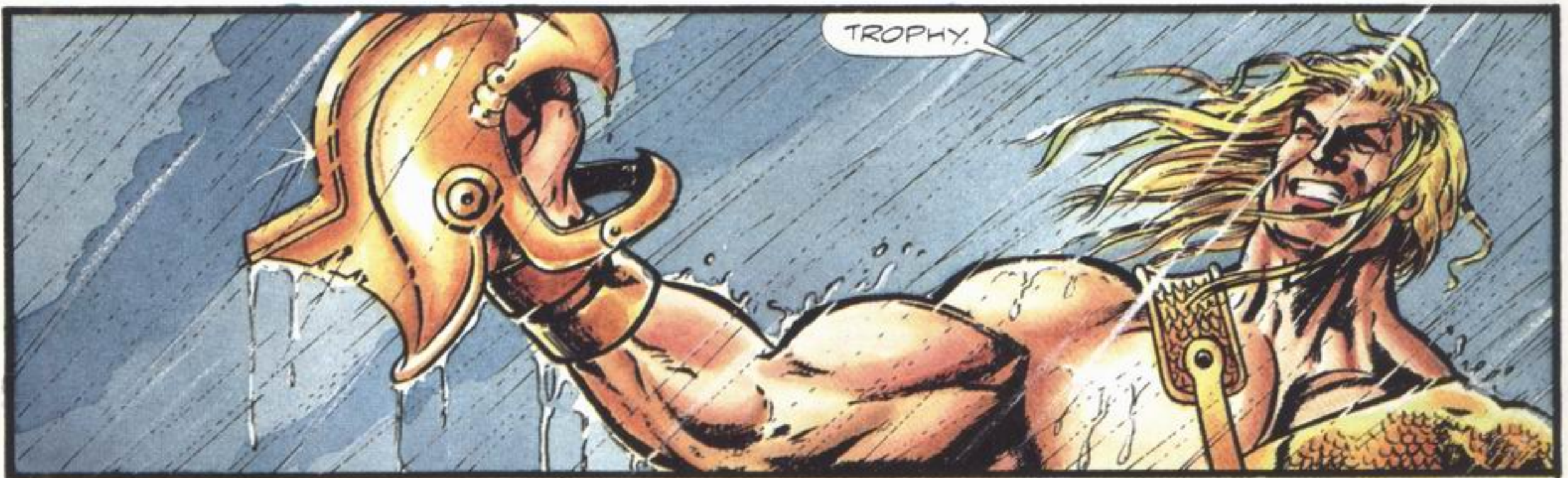
HAH!
NOW I CAN SHOW
YOU WHAT I'M GOING
TO DO TO THAT
BILLY BUFFOON IN
THE RING TONIGHT!



FOUND
HIM TO
MULCH!



TEAR HIM TO PIECES!





NEXT:
ARMAGEDDON
AT THE
GARDEN